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TAGS: [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [GM](#)  
SUBJECT: GERMAN VIEWS ON THE "ROAD TO RIGA"

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. John K. Bauman;  
reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In meetings May 18-19 with USNATO Ambassador Victoria Nuland, German officials were cautious across the board. Nuland focused on the strategic rationale behind our Riga summit initiatives but made only modest headway in broadening German thinking. Nuland found Chancellery and MOD officials generally far more open-minded than the MFA. Specifically, the Germans questioned whether the time was ripe for NATO to grant Georgia Intensified Dialogue (ID) status. They expressed general support for the idea of a NATO "Global Partnership" initiative, but advocated keeping the approach practical and informal. On possible enhanced NATO support for the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur, the Germans confirmed political support but remained cautious about the prospects for German contributions. They agreed with the need to promote closer NATO-EU cooperation, though tended to overestimate the value of informal NATO-EU staff contacts.

¶2. (C) Summary continued: Looking ahead to the NATO Riga Summit, the Germans agreed that training is one of NATO's key strengths. They are prepared to work on a training deliverable, but were hesitant with regard to the idea of a NATO training center in the Greater Middle East (GME). They suggested that NATO expand ongoing training activities for personnel from the region first to test the commitments of potential regional partner governments. MOD officials were fairly cool to the idea of participating in an initiative for NATO countries to purchase and operate C-17s on behalf of NATO, citing Germany's role in the recent stand-up of the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS) as a reason for Germany not doing more now. They were, however, generally open to the idea of increased interoperability between NATO special operations forces (SOF), though they will need to study the proposal further. End Summary.

¶3. (U) During a May 18-19 visit to Berlin, Amb. Nuland discussed USG priorities in the run-up to the Riga Summit with senior German officials, including in separate meetings with MFA State Secretary Reinhard Silberberg, Chancellery National Security Advisor Christoph Heusgen, MOD Parliamentary State Secretary Christian Schmidt, and MFA Deputy Political Director Ulrich Brandenburg. During the visit, Amb. Nuland also emphasized the U.S. message in

interviews with German print and broadcast media, as well as in public outreach events with the Aspen Institute Berlin and the 23rd International Workshop on Global Security.

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NATO Enlargement  
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14. (C) Citing "EU enlargement fatigue", MFA State Secretary Silberberg was skeptical about near-term prospects for Ukraine moving to a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP). He also stated that he thought that the June Informal Defense Ministerial in Brussels would be too soon for NATO to offer Georgia ID, and questioned Georgia's progress on reforms. Beyond "enlargement fatigue", Silberberg highlighted possible Russian reactions as a concern, arguing that "we need to find ways to avoid having Russia spoil the party." NSA Heusgen asked for assurances -- which Nuland said she could not give -- that the USG would not push for MAP for Georgia at the Riga Summit, if Georgia received ID now. MOD Parliamentary State Secretary Schmidt agreed that Georgia's political leadership needs ID sooner than later, in order to demonstrate to the Georgian public the benefits of staying the reform course, saying he personally supported it. However, he noted that the German government had not yet made a decision on ID for Georgia. Amb. Nuland underlined that there is no linkage between EU and NATO enlargement processes, that Ukraine and Georgia should be judged only on NATO criteria, that Russia should not be given a veto over Alliance enlargement decisions, and that the Georgian leadership needs ID now to keep them on course. In a follow-up to her meetings, Amb. Nuland subsequently provided Silberberg, Schmidt, and Heusgen detailed information regarding Georgia's recent achievements on reform.

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Global Partnership for NATO  
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15. (C) Silberberg said that Germany is interested in working closely with countries such as Australia, Japan, and New Zealand, but wants to avoid creating "formalized frameworks" that could lead to expectations that cannot be met. Amb. Nuland explained the USG's concept for a flexible "big box" that would provide current and future partners opportunities for increased cooperation with NATO, without replacing any of the current frameworks. While generally positive in his response, Silberberg stressed the advantages of keeping the approach "practical" and informal, cautioning that otherwise the initiative could run into resistance.

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Darfur  
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16. (C) Amb. Nuland outlined current USG thinking about a two-step approach to enhanced NATO support for the AU as it prepares to transition its operations to a UN mission. She explained that the USG hoped that German staff officers at NATO would be able to participate as called upon in a first phase of further developing AU capacities, and that at least a handful of German military personnel would serve in a second phase as embedded trainers with AU troops, if NATO and the AU decide on this. Silberberg said he thought the approach made sense in political terms, but made no commitment about possible German troop participation. PStS Schmidt noted that, in his former capacity as opposition parliamentarian, he had raised concerns about a possible Darfur mission. With reference to current German parliamentary scrutiny of the EU's upcoming Congo mission, he said he could not yet say what additional contributions Germany would make in Darfur, or even whether there would be any additional contributions. MFA NATO Desk Director Eberhard Pohl was positive on the prospect of German staff officers at NATO being able to provide enabling assistance to the AU, but more cautious about the idea of embedded trainers. Heusgen took Amb. Nuland's message on board, noting the importance of getting through the domestic debate on Congo before Germany could seriously consider even a

modest Darfur contribution. In a similar vein, Chancellery Director for Transatlantic Relations Dirk Brengelmann said Germany sees the decision point on the NATO-Darfur issue as "months" down the road, not weeks. Nuland urged them to be ready for decisions in June.

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NATO-EU Relations  
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¶7. (C) Deputy PolDir Brandenburg remarked that there is considerable interchange at the staff level between the EU and NATO. Amb. Nuland countered that such staff-level interactions are having insufficient effect on EU and NATO institutional relationships, noting that there had not even been informal NATO-EU consultations on the EU's upcoming Congo mission. She said things won't change much unless and until EU Allies push within the EU for more consultation with NATO. Thinking ahead to the German EU Presidency, Heusgen said he wants to brainstorm further on strengthening formal and informal NATO-EU ties, an offer Nuland welcomed.

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NATO Training  
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¶8. (C) Brandenburg remarked that training is one of NATO's key strengths and that programs such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP) are a model for security cooperation. He said that Germany is interested in learning more about current USG thinking about a NATO training center in the Middle East. Brandenburg reported that Germany also was looking at ways to enhance already existing training programs with countries in the region. He wondered if it would not be possible to "put something together that would fly" at the Riga Summit. MFA NATO Desk Director Eberhard Pohl said that it will be important that NATO "not fail" in this effort. Therefore, he explained, Germany was thinking of ways to test the commitment of countries in the region to training with NATO, possibly by bringing the trainees out of the region to already established centers/programs. Observing that NATO countries already were doing that, Amb. Nuland explained the advantages of building long-term relationships both with and within the GME by having a center there. She emphasized the need to ensure regional "buy in" by requiring Middle East states to finance the building and its operational costs, and to participate in curriculum development.

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NATO Strategic Airlift: C-17 Initiative  
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¶9. (C) Amb. Nuland urged MOD PStS Schmidt to give careful consideration to a forthcoming USG proposal for NATO countries to purchase and operate C-17s on behalf of NATO, to help to address the Alliance's dire shortage of strategic airlift. Schmidt responded that, because Germany had just gotten the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS) arrangement up and running, a "second system is not on the agenda for us." However, he said he would be interested in seeing the details of the C-17 proposal.

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NATO Special Operations Forces  
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¶10. (C) Amb. Nuland briefed MOD StS Schmidt on the pending proposal for NATO to increase the interoperability of Allies' national SOF. The initiative possibly could be announced at the Riga Summit. Commenting that he will be in Tampa (CENTCOM) in June, Schmidt underlined that there had been good cooperation among national SOFs in Afghanistan. While indicating general openness to the idea, he conceded that he had not yet thought about enhancing SOF interoperability in the NATO context.

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